

ACT Greens' Johnathan Davis resigns from Legislative Assembly

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■ WATCH: ACT Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury makes a statement regarding serious allegations raised against Greens MLA Johnathan Davis. Johnathan Davis, the ACT Greens member who has been accused of serious sexual misconduct, has resigned from the Legislative Assembly and quit his party.

Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury said Mr Davis had informed him of the intention to quit both the Assembly and the party, and that Mr Davis would write to Speaker Joy Burch to formally tender his resignation.

A lawyer for Mr Davis confirmed late on Sunday he had tendered his resignation to Ms Burch and separately tendered his party resignation to the ACT Greens membership secretary.

Mr Rattenbury said: "The ACT Greens take the conduct of our MLAs seriously and believe Canberrans should rightly expect the highest standards of behaviour, integrity and accountability from our representatives and members in office."

"While there has been no formal finding about Johnathan by any authorities, the intimate information that has been shared about his personal life has caused immense community concern, and the ACT Greens party room supports his decision to resign from office.

"We recognise that the reporting of these events may have caused distress to members of the community, and encourage people to reach out to services to receive support."

Mr Rattenbury said he would have more to say about the issue on Monday.

The ACT Greens met over the weekend to discuss the next steps the party would take after Mr Davis was accused of having sex with a minor and having an inappropriate relationship with a 17-year-old.



📷 Johnathan Davis. Picture by Elesa Kurtz

The Canberra Times understands senior party figures had been encouraging Mr Davis to resign. Chief Minister Andrew Barr called for Mr Davis' resignation on Friday.

While the Greens could have moved to expel Mr Davis, the party would have been unable to force Mr Davis to resign from the Assembly.

Mr Rattenbury on Sunday did not respond to detailed questions about Mr Davis' alleged relationship with a 17-year-old, including claims that the man, now 18, felt pressured to keep the relationship secret and had been encouraged by Mr Davis to send explicit images.

The man who claims to have had a sexual relationship with Mr Davis while he was 17 said the Greens politician pressured him to keep it secret because "people would have opinions but we've done nothing wrong".

He said Mr Davis asked him to send him sexually explicit images and, at one point in their relationship, he had to crawl through the MLA's apartment after sex to avoid being seen on a video call with one of Mr Davis' colleagues.

The Canberra Times on Friday revealed the MLA had been stood down by his party over that matter, as well as a separate accusation Mr Davis had sex with a 15-year-old boy.

Mr Rattenbury on Friday said: "My office has not seen evidence of illegal activity, but we are reporting what we know of the complaints to police."

Both matters have been referred to the police. Mr Davis, through a lawyer, declined to comment on Saturday. He shut down his social media accounts on Friday.

The Chief Minister, Mr Barr, and Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry on Friday said Mr Davis would need to consider his position as the serious allegations affected his ability to function as a member of the Assembly.

"The best path would be to accept what we understand to be the position of the ACT Greens party leadership and resign his position in the Assembly," the pair said in a joint statement.

Mr Barr and Ms Berry said they expected a full police investigation to take place.



📷 Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury on Friday. Picture by Karleen Minney

"We have asked the ACT Greens to ensure support is provided to the individuals who have made these matters public. Other support services are available to members of the community who are distressed by this reporting," the pair said.

Police have confirmed they received a referral but no person alleging to be a victim of Mr Davis' has made a complaint.

A lawyer for Mr Davis on Saturday said: ""He is unaware of the substance of the allegations made regarding his conduct, but understands from Mr Rattenbury's public statement that certain matters have been referred to police. Whilst those matters are being reviewed by police, it is inappropriate for Mr Davis, or others, to comment upon any allegations being made regarding his conduct."

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Mr Davis, who is openly gay, was elected to the fifth Brindabella seat at the 2020 ACT election by a margin of 82 votes.

Mr Davis had run for the Greens at the 2012 and 2016 ACT elections and stood for the federal seat of Bean in 2019. Mr Davis became involved in politics after campaigning, aged 15, against the planned closure of Kambah High School in 2006 and joined the Greens in 2008.

In his inaugural speech to the Assembly, Mr Davis described himself as a loud guy who wore his heart on his sleeve.

"I am someone who, in my lifetime, has found myself homeless, and I know what it feels like to have experienced sexual assault. There is a lot more to me, and indeed to any one of us, than we often give each other credit for. I am the sum of my diverse experiences, and those experiences inform my values," he said.

Mr Davis, a former real estate agent, has led the ACT Greens' push for a rent freeze, short-stay rental accommodation regulation and a voting age lowered to 16.

Support is available for those who may be distressed. Phone Lifeline 13 11 14; Mensline 1300 789 978; Kids Helpline 1800 551 800; beyondblue 1300 224 636; 1800-RESPECT 1800 737 732.

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